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which our aborigines do not hesitate to make, that before the Europeans landed in those parts of the American continent, they were unacquainted with that shameful disorder which attacks generation in its sources. I am well aware that this complaint is generally believed to have been communicated by the new world to the old. I do not know upon what proofs this opinion rests, but I am disposed to give credit to the uniform assertion of our northern Indians, that this contagion was first introduced among them by emigrants from Europe. However it may be, it is a lamentable fact that they are now very generally infected with it, and that their population can not long resist its destructive operation upon their once strong and healthy constitutions, particularly as it is associated with the abuse of strong liquors, now so prevalent among them.

Of the manner in which they have acquired this latter vice, I presume there can be no doubt. They charge us in the most positive manner with being the first who made them acquainted with ardent spirits, and what is worse, with having exerted all the means in our power to induce them to drink to excess. It is very certain that the processes of distillation and fermentation are entirely unknown to the Indians, and that they have among them no intoxicating liquors but such as they receive from us. The Mexicans have their *Pulque*, and other indigenous beverages of an inebriating nature, but the North American Indians, before their intercourse with us commenced, had absolutely nothing of the kind. The smoke of the American weed, tobacco, was the only means that they at that time had in use to produce a temporary exhilaration of their spirits.

I have related in a former chapter,* the curious account given by the Delawares and Mohicans of the scene which took place when they were first made to taste spirituous liquors by the Dutch who landed on New York

* See ch. 2.

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733 Island. I have no doubt that this tradition is substantially founded on fact. Indeed, it is strongly corroborated by the name which, in consequence of this adventure, those people gave at the time to that island, and which it has retained to this day. They called it *Manahachtanienk*, which in the Delaware language, means "*the island where we all became intoxicated.*" We have corrupted this name into *Manhattan*, but not so as to destroy its meaning, or conceal its origin. The last syllable which we have left out is only a termination, implying locality, and in this word signifies as much as *where we*. There are few Indian traditions so well supported as this.

How far from that time the dreadful vice of intoxication has increased among those poor Indians, is well known to many Christian people among us. We may safely calculate on thousands who have perished by the baneful effect of spirituous liquors. The dreadful war which took place in 1774 between the Shawanese, some of the Mingoes, and the people of Virginia, in which so many lives were lost, was brought on by the consequences of drunkenness. It produced murders, which were followed by private revenge, and ended in a most cruel and destructive war.

The general prevalence of this vice among the Indians is in a great degree owing to unprincipled white traders, who persuade them to become intoxicated that they may cheat them the more easily, and obtain their lands or peltries for a mere trifle. Within the last fifty years, some instances have even come to my knowledge of white men having enticed Indians to drink, and when drunk, murdered them. The effects which intoxication produces upon the Indians are dreadful. It has been the cause of an infinite number of murders among them, besides biting off noses and otherwise disfiguring each other, which are the least consequences of the quarrels which inebriation produces between them. I cannot say how many have died of colds and other disorders,

[Lenapeism. See cat. 116, p. 348. -Analyst]

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which they have caught by lying upon the cold ground, and remaining exposed to the elements when drunk; others have lingered out their lives, in excruciating rheumatic pains and in wasting consumptions, until death came to relieve them from their sufferings. 133

Reflecting Indians have keenly remarked, "that it was "strange that a people who professed themselves believ- "ers in a religion revealed to them by the great Spirit "himself; who say that they have in their houses the "WORD of God, and his laws and commandments "textually written, could think of making a *beson*,* cal- "culated to bewitch people and make them destroy one "another." I once asked an Indian at Pittsburg, whom I had not before seen, who he was? He answered in broken English: "My name is *Black-fish*; when at home "with my nation, I am a clever fellow, and when here, "a *hog*." He meant that by means of the liquor which the white people gave him, he was sunk down to the level of that beast.

An Indian who had been born and brought up at Minisink, near the Delaware Water Gap, and to whom the German inhabitants of that neighbourhood had given the name of *Cornelius Rosenbaum*, told me near fifty years ago, that he had once, when under the influence of strong liquor, killed the best Indian friend he had, fancying him to be his worst avowed enemy. He said that the deception was complete, and that while intoxicated, the face of his friend presented to his eyes all the features of the man with whom he was in a state of hostility. It is impossible to express the horror with which he was struck when he awoke from that delusion; he was so shocked, that he from that moment resolved never more to taste of the maddening poison, of which he was convinced that the devil was the inventor; for it could only be the evil spirit who made him see his enemy when his friend was

* This word means *liquor*, and is also used in the sense of a medicinal draught, or other compound potion.

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733 before him, and produced so strong a delusion on hi bewildered senses, that he actually killed him. From that time until his death, which happened thirty years afterwards, he never drank a drop of ardent spirits, which he always called "the Devil's blood," and was firmly persuaded that the Devil, or some of his inferior spirits, had a hand in preparing it.

Once in my travels, I fell in with an Indian and his son; the former, though not addicted to drinking, had this time drank some liquor with one of his acquaintances, of which he now felt the effects. As he was walking before me, along the path, he at once flew back and aside, calling out "O! what a monstrous snake!" On my asking him where the snake lay, he pointed to something and said "Why, there, across the path!" "A snake!" said I, "it is nothing but a black-burnt sapling, which "has fallen on the ground." He, however, would not be persuaded; he insisted that it was a snake, and could be nothing else; therefore, to avoid it, he went round the path, and entered it again at some distance further. After we had travelled together for about two hours, during which time he spoke but little, we encamped for the night. Awaking about midnight, I saw him sitting up smoking his pipe, and appearing to be in deep thought. I asked him why he did not lay down and sleep? To which he replied, "O my friend! many things have crowded on my mind; I am quite lost in thought!"

HECKEW. "And what are you thinking about?"

INDIAN. "Did you say it was not a snake of which I was afraid, and which lay across the path?"

HECKEW. "I did say so; and, indeed, it was nothing else but a sapling burnt black by the firing of the woods."

INDIAN. "Are you sure it was that?"

HECKEW. "Yes; and I called to you at the time to "look, how I was standing on it; and if you have yet a "doubt, ask your son, and the two Indians with me, and "they will tell you the same."

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INDIAN. "O strange! and I took it for an uncommonly large snake, moving as if it intended to bite me!—I cannot get over my surprise, that the liquor I drank, and, indeed, that was not much, should have so deceived me! but I think I have now discovered how it happens that Indians so often kill one another when drunk, almost without knowing what they are doing; and when afterwards they are told of what they have done, they ascribe it to the liquor which was in them at the time, and say the liquor did it. I have thought that as I saw this time a living snake in a dead piece of wood, so I might, at another time, take a human being, perhaps one of my own family, for a bear or some other ferocious beast and kill him. Can you, my friend, tell me what is in the *beson* that confuses one so, and transforms things in that manner? Is it an invisible spirit? It must be something alive; or have the white people sorcerers among them, who put something in the liquor to deceive those who drink it? Do the white people drink of the same liquor that they give to the Indians? Do they also, when drunk, kill people, and bite noses off, as the Indians do? Who taught the white people to make so pernicious a *beson*?"

I answered all these questions, and several others that he put to me, in the best manner that I could, to which he replied, and our conversation continued as follows:

INDIAN. "Well, if, as you say, the bad spirit cannot be the inventor of this liquor; if, in some cases it is moderately used among you as a medicine, and if your doctors can prepare from it, or with the help of a little of it, some salutary *besons*, still, I must believe that when it operates as you have seen, the bad spirit must have some hand in it, either by putting some bad thing into it, unknown to those who prepare it, or you have conjurers who understand how to bewitch it.—Perhaps they only do so to that which is for the Indians; for the devil is not the Indians' friend, because they will

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"not worship him, as they do the good spirit, and there-
"fore I believe he puts something into the *beson*, for the
"purpose of destroying them."

HECKEW. "What the devil may do with the li-
"quor, I cannot tell; but I believe that he has a hand in
"every thing that is bad. When the Indians kill one
"another, bite off each other's noses, or commit such
"wicked acts, he is undoubtedly well satisfied; for, as
"God himself has said, he is a destroyer and a mur-
"derer."

INDIAN. "Well, now, we think alike, and henceforth
"he shall never again deceive me, or entice me to drink
"his *beson*."

It is a common saying with those white traders who find it their interest to make the Indians drunk, in order to obtain their peltry at a cheaper rate, that they *will* have strong liquors, and will not enter upon a bargain unless they are sure of getting it. I acknowledge that I have seen some such cases; but I could also state many from my own knowledge, where the Indians not only refused liquor, but resisted during several days all the attempts that were made to induce them even to taste it, being well aware, as well as those who offered it to them, that if they once should put it to their lips, such was their weakness on that score, that intoxication would inevitably follow.

I can, perhaps, offer a plausible reason why the Indians are so fond of spirituous drinks. The cause is, I believe, to be found in their living almost entirely upon fresh meats and green vegetables, such as corns, pumpkins, squashes, potatoes, cucumbers, melons, beans, &c. which causes a longing in their stomachs for some seasoning, particularly (as is often the case) when they have been a long time without salt. They are, on those occasions, equally eager for any acid substances; vinegar, if they can get it, they will drink in considerable quantities, and think nothing of going thirty or forty miles in search of

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cranberries, whether in season or not. They also gather crab-apples, wild-grapes, and other acid and even bitter-tasted fruits, as substitutes for salt, and in the spring they will peel such trees as have a sourish sap, which they lick with great avidity. When for a long time they have been without salt, and are fortunate enough to get some, they will swallow at a time a table-spoonful of that mineral substance, for which they say that they and their horses are equally hungry.

The Indians are very sensible of the state of degradation to which they have been brought by the abuse of strong liquors, and whenever they speak of it, never fail to reproach the whites for having enticed them into that vicious habit. I could easily prove how guilty the whites are in this respect, if I were to relate a number of anecdotes, which I rather wish to consign to oblivion. The following will be sufficient to confute those disingenuous traders, who would endeavour to shift the blame from themselves, in order to fix it upon the poor deluded Indians.

In the year 1769, an Indian from Susquehannah having came to Bethlehem with his sons to dispose of his peltry, was accosted by a trader from a neighbouring town, who addressed him thus: "Well! Thomas, I really believe you have turned Moravian." "Moravian!" answered the Indian, "what makes you think so?"—"Because," replied the other, "you used to come to us "to sell your skins and peltry, and now you trade them "away to the Moravians." "So!" rejoined the Indian, "now I understand you well, and I know what you mean "to say. Now hear me.—See, my friend! when I come "to this place with my skins and peltry to trade, the "people are kind, they give me plenty of good victuals "to eat, and pay me in money or whatever I want, and "no one says a word to me about drinking rum—neither "do I ask for it! When I come to your place with my "peltry, all call to me: 'Come, Thomas! here's rum,

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"drink heartily, drink! it will not hurt you.' All this
"is done for the purpose of cheating me. When you
"have obtained from me all you want, you call me a
"drunken dog, and kick me out of the room.—See! this
"is the manner in which you cheat the Indians when they
"come to trade with you. So now you know when you
"see me coming to your town again, you may say to
"one another: 'Ah! there is Thomas coming again!
"he is no longer a Moravian, for he is coming to us to
"be made drunk—to be cheated—to be kicked out of the
"house, and be called a *drunken dog!*'"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FUNERALS.

I BELIEVE that no sufficiently detailed account has yet been given of the manner in which the North American Indians conduct the funerals of their dead. Captain Carver tells us that the Naudowessies, among whom he was, kept those ceremonies a secret, and would not give him an opportunity of witnessing them. Loskiel, although he drew his information from the journals of our Missionaries, has treated this subject rather superficially. I therefore run little risk of repetition in describing what I have myself seen, and I hope that the particulars which I am going to relate will not be thought uninteresting.

It is well known that the Indians pay great respect to the memory of the dead, and commit their remains to the